

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT WALL STREET JOURNAL EDITORIAL
MONDAY, AUGUST 9, HEADED "CALMING THE WORLD'S WATERS."

2. SOME 2,500 DELEGATES FROM MORE THAN 150 NATIONS ARE
ATTENDING THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE AT THE UN, THE
FOURTH MAJOR NEGOTIATING SESSION IN LESS THAN THREE YEARS.
NOW THAT NO ONE OUTSIDE OF TURTLE BAY ANY LONGER BELIEVES
THE UN IS MANKIND'S LAST GREAT HOPE FOR PEACE, WE'RE ASKED
TO BELIEVE THAT THIS UN CONFERENCE IS MANKIND'S LAST
GREAT HOPE FOR CALMING THE PROBLEMS THAT BESET THE WORLD'S
WATERS.

3. FISHING RIGHTS, RIGHTS OF TRANSIT THROUGH STRAITS,
TERRITORIAL LIMITS AND OCEAN POLLUTION ARE ALL, OF COURSE,
VALID INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS, AND IF AGREEMENT CAN BE
WORKED OUT IN AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM SO MUCH THE BETTER.
BUT NATIONS HAVE TENDED TO WORK THEM OUT BILATERALLY OR ON
AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS WITH NO MORE THAN THE USUAL DIPLOMATIC
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PROBLEMS. SO IF THE CONFERENCE FAILS TO COME UP WITH A

TREATY ON THESE MATTERS IT MAY BE INCONVENIENT BUT SURELY NOT THE CALAMITY THAT IS SOMETIMES PREDICTED.

4. ACTUALLY, A CONSENSUS OF SORTS HAS MORE OR LESS EMERGED ON MOST OF THE PROBLEMS MENTIONED ABOVE. IT'S ALSO PRETTY WELL AGREED THAT COASTAL STATES ARE ENTITLED TO "ECONOMIC ZONES" OF 200 MILES, WITHIN WHICH EACH WILL HAVE EXCLUSIVE FISHING AND MINERAL RIGHTS. LANDLOCKED NATIONS ARE ON RECORD DEMANDING A SHARE OF PROFITS FROM MINING WITHIN THESE ZONES, BUT IT'S PRETTY WELL ACCEPTED THAT THIS IS MERELY A PRO FORMA DEMAND.

5. THEIR MAIN CONCERN, AND THE KEY ISSUE AT THE CONFERENCE, IS WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE MINERAL WEALTH BEYOND 200 MILES, THAT HOARD OF NICKEL, COPPER, MANGANESE AND COBALT NODULES SAID TO BE LYING ON THE FLOOR OF THE DEEP SEA WAITING TO BE SCOOPED UP LIKE MELONS. A REASONABLE ANSWER, ONE MIGHT SUPPOSE, WOULD BE FOR NATIONS THAT HAVE THE KNOW-HOW AND ARE WILLING TO TAKE THE RISK TO GO OUT AND MINE THEM, AS JAPAN IS ALREADY DOING ON A SMALL SCALE. U.S. FIRMS ARE PREPARED TO DO JUST THAT, AND THERE ARE BILLS IN CONGRESS AUTHORIZING THEM TO DO SO.

6. BUT LAW OF THE SEA DELEGATES ARE DETERMINED TO GO DOWN IN FLAMES, IF NEED BE, TO PREVENT THAT. THIRD WORLD NATIONS HAVE DECLARED THE DEEP SEA BED RICHES "THE COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND," AND INSIST THAT THEY SHOULD BE EXPLOITED ONLY BY AN INTERNATIONAL SEA BED AUTHORITY. THEIR CLAIM SOUNDS ALL VERY HIGH-MINDED, LIKE SO MANY UN FORMULAS, UNTIL IT'S UNDERSTOOD WHAT IS REALLY AT STAKE HERE: A POT OF GOLD FOR INTERNATIONAL BUREAUCRATS, INDEPENDENT REVENUES THAT WOULD ALLOW THEM TO LIVE IN THE STYLE TO WHICH THEY BELIEVE THEMSELVES ENTITLED WITHOUT HAVING TO ACCOUNT TO THE TAXPAYERS (PARTICULARLY U.S. TAXPAYERS) WHO NOW FOOT THE UN BILL.

7. EVEN THE U.S. PROPOSAL FOR A "BANKING SYSTEM," UNDER WHICH EQUAL SECTIONS OF SEABED WOULD BE GIVEN TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISES AND TO AN INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITY ACTING IN THE NAME OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, IS RIDDLED WITH AMBI-
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GUITY AND WITH MORE HOLES THAN A LEAKY FISH NET. FOR EXAMPLE, WHO WOULD BE REPRESENTED ON THAT GLOBAL COUNCIL? WHO WOULD SUPPLY THE MONEY AND TECHNOLOGY FOR EXPENSIVE MINING OPERATIONS THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING TALK ABOUT MERELY PLUCKING RICHES FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR, CONTAINS VERY REAL RISKS?

8. MANY AMERICANS HAVE ONLY RECENTLY COME TO APPRECIATE

HOW THE UN'S VARIOUS POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL BLOCS TEND TO EXACERBATE PROBLEMS RATHER THAN PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL SOLUTIONS AND PROGRESS. IT'S CURIOUS, THEN, THAT SOME OF THESE SAME SKEPTICS BELIEVE THAT THESE RI-

VALRIES AND JEALOUSIES WILL DISAPPEAR OR BE SUBORDINATED TO INTERNATIONAL HARMONY WHEN THE QUESTION IS DEEP SEA MINING. IF ANYTHING, THEY ARE EVEN MORE LIKELY TO INTENSIFY, GIVEN THAT GARDEN OF HESPERIDES ON THE OCEAN'S FLOOR WAITING TO BE HARVESTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAUCRATS.

9. IT MAY BE IMPOLITIC TO SAY SO, IN VIEW OF THE MANY SOLEMN ASSURANCES THAT IT IS ALREADY FIVE MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT, BUT THE BEST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN AT THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE WOULD BE FOR THOSE 2,500 ANCIENT DELEGATE MARINERS TO AGREE TO KEEP ON DISAGREERING. AND TO GET ON WITH MINING THOSE IMPORTANT DEEP SEA METALS AS TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMICS PERMIT, IN THE INTEREST NOT OF AN INTERNATIONAL BUREAUCRACY BUT OF IMPROVING THE LOT OF MANKIND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. END TEXT. HABIB

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